

How to Succeed With Volunteers-In-Parks

60-Minute Module Series

TRAINING

Training Guide

HANDOUTS

**National Park Service
Volunteers-In-Parks Program**



Guide to Handouts

H-1: Key Concepts of Training

H-2: Tips for Training VIPs

Key Concepts of Training

The purpose of training volunteers is to improve their skills or behavior in such a way that they do their job more effectively.

Concept 1

Training for volunteers can be either formal or informal.

Formal training is usually scheduled, sometimes in a classroom, and usually involves a group of students. Often, more than one instructor is used, as well as a variety of training resources and training techniques. Informal training can involve coaching, where specific skills are demonstrated, then practiced and improved; counseling, where discussion and questions are used to help volunteers discover how to improve their performance; or self-study, where volunteers use books, video tapes, computer programs, etc.

Concept 2

Training for volunteers should be of the highest quality available.

Give your volunteers the best training you can. Be resourceful. Include volunteers in training for paid staff. Tap into local training opportunities. Partner training with other districts, divisions, and parks. Get outside instructor costs donated or at reduced rates. Use volunteer expertise to help develop and deliver the training. Use skilled trainers and a wide variety of training techniques. Volunteers should get the clear message that you value their time, skills, and willingness to learn.

Concept 3

Job training for volunteers should explain the purpose of the job, how to perform the job, and how the volunteer relates to other staff in performing the job.

Volunteers need to know how their job relates to overall park operations and to the park mission. They need to know how to do their job, including what they should, and should not do, and what to do in specific situations, like emergencies. They also need to know how their position relates to the rest of the staff and should know who is in charge of their project, who else is working on it, and where to go if they need help.

Concept 4

The NPS resources committed to volunteer training must be balanced against the services donated by the volunteer.

It is only reasonable to consider the total commitment of time and skills that the volunteer has agreed to when deciding what an appropriate investment in training resources would be. If the commitment is there and the attitude is there, make the investment!

Tips for Training VIPs

Always include instruction on the purpose of the job, how to perform the job, and how the volunteer relates to other staff when doing the job.

Bridge the gap between the skill level of the volunteer and the skills needed to do the job.

Use both formal and informal training techniques, as appropriate.

Offer the highest quality training available.

Tap into all available resources, including paid staff training and non-NPS training.

Use skilled paid staff and volunteer expertise to help develop and deliver training.

Include training on appropriate safety skills and messages.

Balance the training resources committed against the services donated by the volunteer.

Schedule training so that skills taught can be applied to the job in a timely manner.

Use existing standards to maintain the quality of training.

Define and meet mandatory training needs for each volunteer job.